





thanks, brain!



Chaz
 [cvillette](#)

<https://cvillette.livejournal.com/2008-08-28> 12:28:00

MOOD:  sleepy, for some strange reason

MUSIC: Ane Brun - To Let Myself Go

I woke up at 3 am with my heart pounding, from a totally surreal nightmare about trying to get rid of a live grenade that somehow kept returning, like a boomerang or like a big cartoon bomb as experienced by my hapless Warner Brothers alter ego. And it would never go off, but I knew it was going to, anyway, and for some reason I had no strength to throw it hard enough to make it go away.

And you know how sometimes you're awake but not really, in that some part of the forebrain is functioning, but the sleep paralysis is still weighing your limbs down and your cognition is muddled and drunken and surreal? I must have been very deep under when I woke myself up, because that lasted for a subjective millennium, while my hindbrain was screaming that *a serial killer is in the room with you and you need to get away now!*

Anyway, for like fifteen minutes after I finally really woke up, I couldn't shake the sensation that somebody else was there.

This is what I get for case reports before bedtime, isn't it?

Really wish I knew what my subconscious thought it was symbolizing with that tar baby hand grenade.



[locked] Dream Journal

All right, unconscious mind. We're coming to an accommodation. If the dreams are you cleaning


Elvis doesn't live here anymore.

Hey there. Sorry about the drama. It was... it was an emotional decision, and I didn't

Poppets. Puppets. Poppet
puppets. Scary.

26 comments



 [tamnonlinear](#)

[August 28 2008, 16:47:52 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Sounds like a night terror. They happen at the edge of sleep, rather than the deep dreaming of nightmares. Sense of paralysis and a menacing figure in the room are par for the course. A heavy weight on the chest or sense of being slightly out of body are also normal.


It's really weird how specific of a set of hallucinations our bodies seem to be pre-programmed to conjure up, but night terrors tend to take a fairly set shape like that. Can't move, things don't feel right, I'm in danger.

I got them a lot as a kid. A little kid with no particular trauma in my life, and my parents had to give me a note to get out of nap time in kindergarten because I was so afraid of the dark from the night terrors.

I've only had a few as an adult, maybe one a year. These days my backbrain is oddly well trained. In pretty much any dream where I'm feeling menaced, my brain goes hyper-rational and thinks out of it. Last night terror I had, I realized the dream state had put my bedroom door in the wrong position, so this wasn't really my bedroom, so that really wasn't a person standing by my bed, so it's all a dream and I have to wake up *now*. One previous to that, I noticed the bedroom door didn't squeak properly when it swung open.

I've had too much practice with menacing-figure-in-the-bedroom stuff, but at least I'm good at dealing with it now.



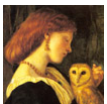
 [nebula99](#)

[August 28 2008, 17:36:12 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

My daughter gets night terrors when she has a temperature or if she is over tired. She shouts out, cries, sits up in bed or thrashes around and all with her eyes open. She usually settles after a while but she has no idea that I am there and no recollection of it in the morning. It freaks my other half out no end.

Sounds like your subconscious is very well trained if you can be aware that you are dreaming. Does it work in non-scary dreams?

cvillette - I would hazard a guess at the grenade, but I'm sure you know your own subconscious better than I do.



 [tamnonlinear](#)

[August 28 2008, 17:47:46 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

We never figured out what was causing the night terrors when I was a kid. They just faded after a while.

For non-scary dreams I'm usually enjoying the story. I did have one good non-scary dream recently where I was deeply disappointed to realize that I couldn't focus my eyes properly on some text, which meant that *it was all a dream*. Rats.

I'm not generally a fan of the idea of lucid dreaming; thinking through dreams sounds like work, and I'm sleeping to escape that in the first place. If it's a good dream or a neat story, where's the motivation to step outside of it? I tend to only yank myself out of bad dreams and just enjoy the others.



 [kayjayoh](#)

[August 28 2008, 19:51:44 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

I don't remember if I got night terrors as a kid, but I know for sure that I've been getting them pretty steadily since college...maybe high school.

They really freaked me out for a long time, even after the night, because I couldn't think of any explanation other than anything wierd and supernatural. Then I found out about night terrors and realized that was what they were, and I feel much better about it all now. Sometimes it even makes the night terror fade faster, if I wake up enough that my brain can process "Oh, night terror. That's nice."

Generally I get to the "wake up enough" stage by saying something outloud like "NO" or "Go away" and then I go back to sleep.

Man, our brains are weird. Wonderful strange. Mysterious. Amazing.

(And I must say, there is a great bit of recursion involved when we try to study and understand how are brains work, given that we are using our brain to try to understand our brain. Ok, going to shut up now because I could go on and on about this topic, but if I do that I'd better do it on my own damn LJ and not hijack your comment thread.)

 [kelliem](#)

[August 28 2008, 17:14:39 UTC](#)

Edited: [August 28 2008, 17:15:09 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Really wish I knew what my subconscious thought it was symbolizing with that tar baby hand grenade.

Hm... completely amateur dream analysis here-- it sounds to me like your conscious mind feels as if you're in danger (the live grenade you can't get rid of) but your subconscious realizes that the threat is not real (hence the never going off part)?

I'm probably wrong but that would be my first interpretation.



 [zwol](#)

[August 28 2008, 18:14:04 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Other way around, I would think, and not so much conscious versus subconscious as amygdala (threat) versus frontal cortex (it isn't real)...

Suspended comment



 [capecorey](#)

[August 28 2008, 18:13:57 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Unexpected advantage of the para-quad thing... if I *can* move, it's a dream.

Have some steamed milk and a hug from a Tiny Dog.



[tylik](#)

[August 28 2008, 20:46:54 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

"And you know how sometimes you're awake but not really, in that some part of the forebrain is functioning, but the sleep paralysis is still weighing your limbs down and your cognition is muddled and drunken and surreal?"

Huh. One effect of my insomnia is that I only get that when I'm really relaxed. (I've done some really good design work in that space.)

I hadn't quite thought of that as an advantage before...



[cvillette](#)

[August 28 2008, 20:52:48 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

The sleep paralysis thing is a transition state for me: I mostly get it when suddenly awakened from REM sleep and my body hasn't quite let go of the safety straps and realized the brain is awake yet.



[tylik](#)

[August 28 2008, 22:40:48 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

My variant of insomnia seems to be "vast amounts of adrenaline, now!" so, mostly, no transition states. The first time I can remember waking up slowly I was in my late twenties and on some fairly serious meds for a spine injury. But: I almost never have nightmares (I just wake up).

If I'm quite relaxed, and I've been training hard, I'll sometimes reach a point that feels like my brain has gotten enough sleep, and my body hasn't. I'll be kind of distantly aware that I'm lying in bed, and it's kind of an odd mental place. (I worked out this really nifty sigmoidal activation function for a neural net I'm building in one of those...)



[cvillette](#)

[August 29 2008, 01:28:25 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

You're building a neural net? Right on!



[tylik](#)

[August 29 2008, 09:46:57 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Just a wee little one at the moment. It's part of a computer simulation demonstrating the (soft body) biomechanics and neural control of part of the feeding apparatus of a sea hare. Or at least that's what I should be doing. Mostly I've been nursing a spine injury, and making inane comments on people's livejournals in my semi-dazed state.



[citremlett](#)

August 28 2008, 23:09:18 UTC COLLAPSE

I get those sometimes. The killer-in-the-room ones. Or the thief-in-the-house. Actually, I think I understand the thief ones, because they're always stealing my laptop and my laptop is so crucial to so much that I do.

Then again, I had one of those only it wasn't a thief or a killer, it was The Empty Child from Doctor Who. Creepy as hell!

I usually associate those kind of dreams with stress about something or another, though I've had them when I couldn't think of anything I was stressed about, so who knows?

The hand grenade coming back sounds to me like there's something you want to get rid of that doesn't seem to be going away when it ought to. Totally amateur dream interpretation.

If you're reading casefiles before bed, I think I'd be more surprised if you -didn't- sometimes have a nightmare triggered by them!



 calanthe_b

August 29 2008, 04:04:53 UTC COLLAPSE

Ugh. Dreams like that = never fun. Especially when followed by the not-properly-waking-up thing.

Really wish I knew what my subconscious thought it was symbolizing with that tar baby hand grenade.

~contemplates quoting Commander Ivanova~



 cvillette

August 29 2008, 11:30:13 UTC COLLAPSE

Boom tomorrow?



 bunny_m

August 29 2008, 13:02:13 UTC COLLAPSE

Always Boom Tomorrow

Never argue with a Russian when they are being gloomy.

Many sympathies over the Night Terror as well. I used to seriously hate those frigging things, but fortunately I've had only one puny one in the past several years.

Mine always manifested as a '**SOMETHING**istryingto/comingtogetyou!!!!' without ever giving me so much as a hint of just what/how/why, which, for me at least, always made it so much worse.

waves his box of eHUGS at you offeringly




 cvillette

August 29 2008, 13:09:25 UTC COLLAPSE

Never argue with a Russian, period.

The funny thing was that I was physically scared, but not emotionally. Until I finished waking up, and then I was creeped.

I tell you. Freaky.

 bunny_m
August 29 2008, 13:26:38 UTC COLLAPSE

Never argue with a Russian, period.


Ha! I'd do it, should I get the chance.

Of course, one of my favourite past times is poking a Dragon, so obviously my survival instincts/common sense aren't very good.

My *reflexes*, on the other hand... ;)

I always found it took me a couple of hours to calm the hell down after a night terror, as I slowly went from borderline catatonic/totally freaked out to merely really creeped and **really** tired. Made for not very fun following days, either.

Don't miss those suckers at all, nosir.


 calanthe_b
August 30 2008, 03:26:47 UTC COLLAPSE

~dances~ I love it when people get my references!

I actually had one of those dream/wake experiences last night, believe it or not. Felt like somebody was pulling my hands down flat onto the mattress and pinning them there, and even when I woke up properly and knew that my hands were folded over my ribcage, I still thought they were being held down.

Coincidence = funny thing, no?

But it makes perfect sense to me how people in that brainstate can truly believe they've been abducted by aliens. It feels more real than the world does when you wake up...

 edschweppe
August 29 2008, 15:34:39 UTC COLLAPSE

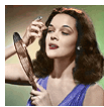
I've got no idea what that tar-baby was (except maybe taking work home?), but I must confess: my first reaction to "somebody else was there" was the Angry Kitteh.



 [cvillette](#)

[August 29 2008, 16:00:48 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

I don't think she'd get that close. But for a minute I thought so too.



 [Ometotchtli](#)

[August 29 2008, 21:55:17 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Tar Baby Hand Grenade would make a righteous band name.



 [cvillette](#)

[August 29 2008, 22:09:07 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Trust you to come up with that. They could cover "Stuck on You."



 [Ometotchtli](#)

[August 30 2008, 00:35:00 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

>X+P *paws over eyes*



 [cvillette](#)

[August 30 2008, 05:04:57 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Thenkyew. Thenkyew. I'll be here all week.

[locked] [Dream Journal](#)

All right, unconscious mind. We're coming to an accommodation. If the dreams are you cleaning

[Elvis doesn't live here anymore.](#)

Hey there. Sorry about the drama. It was... it was an emotional decision, and I didn't

[Poppets. Puppets. Poppet puppets. Scary.](#)